

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 EB-11 SCEM-02 SCI-06 IO-14 OMB-01

IGA-02 CU-04 DRC-01 /188 W  
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P R 211150Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9227

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL UDORN

USLO PEKING

DIA

DEA HQS

CINCPAC

USSAG NKP

13TH ADVON UDORN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 19786

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: READINGS OF THE BANGKOK POLITICAL BAROMETER THROUGH

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DECEMBER 21

REF: BANGKOK 19397

SUMMARY: THE MEETING OF THE 2343 MAN NATIONAL CONVENTION WAS THE PENULTIMATE POLITICAL EVENT OF THE WEEK. BUOYED BY THE KING'S OPENING ADDRESS AND BLOC LOBBYING, THE DELEGATES CAST THEIR BALLOTS. THE CONVENTION OVERSHADOWED NEWS REPORTS THAT COLONEL NARONG KITTIKACHORN LEFT TAIPEI FOR GERMANY. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHARTCHAI CHUNHAWAN RETURNED FROM SAUDI ARABIA CLAIMING A PROMISE OF OIL AND IMMEDIATELY DEPARTED FOR PEKING. END SUMMARY.

1. THE MEETING OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION HELD THE SPOTLIGHT THROUGHOUT THE WEEK. AFTER DISSOLVING THE THANOM APPOINTED NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (NLA), THE KING OPENED THE CONVENTION. THE DELEGATES THEN BEGAN CASTING THEIR VOTES TO SELECT THE 299 PEOPLE WHO WOULD CONSTITUTE THE NEW NLA. THE LOBBYING AND CAUCUSES WHICH PRECEDED THE MEETING HAD SOME EFFECT AS MINISTRY OF INTERIOR OFFICIALS, WHO COMPRISED 13 PER CENT OF THE CONVENTION, WON 23 PER CENT OF THE SEATS IN THE NLA. ROYALIST, NOTED JOURNALIST, GADFLY AND OWNER OF THE PRESTIGIOUS SIAM RATH NEWSPAPER, KUKRIT PRAMOTE, RECEIVED THE LARGEST NUMBER OF VOTES. DR. PUEY UNGPHAKORN, POPULAR CANDIDATE FOR PRIME MINISTER ONCE ELECTIONS ARE HELD, RECEIVED THE SECOND HIGHEST VOTE TOTAL. DR. KASEM SUWANNAKUL, DEAN OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY RAN THIRD. ALSO AMONG THE LUCKY WINNERS IS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SAMLOR DRIVERS' ASSOCIATION.

2. COLONEL NARONG KITTIKACHORN LEFT TAIPEI DECEMBER 15 FOR FRANKFURT, GERMANY. THE BANGKOK PRESS HAS MOSTLY GIVEN INSIDE PAGE COVERAGE TO THE EVENT. HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, PRAPHAT CHARUSATHIEN, APPARENTLY DID NOT ACCOMPANY HIM. THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS RELEASED A STATEMENT SAYING THAT THE EXILES WILL NOT REMAIN IN ASIA.

3. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHARTCHAI CHUNHAWAN RETURNED FROM SAUDI ARABIA AND ANNOUNCED THAT KING FAISAL HAD AGREED TO RESTORE EARLIER CRUDE OIL CUTBACKS. MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION, HOWEVER, HAVE TOLD US CONFLICTING STORIES  
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ABOUT WHAT CONCESSIONS FAISAL MAY HAVE MADE. UPON HIS RETURN CHARTCHAI TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT THAILAND AND SAUDI ARABIA HAD REACHED AN "AGREEMENT", BUT THAT A CONTRACT HAD NOT BEEN SIGNED. CHARTCHAI THEN IMMEDIATELY LEFT FOR PEKING TO NEGOTIATE ON THE CHINESE OFFER OF 50,000 TONS OF DIESEL OIL AND OTHER TRADE QUESTIONS (BANGKOK 19363). CHARTCHAI MENTIONED AT AN AIRPORT PRESS CONFERENCE THAT THE CABINET HAD RESCINDED THE DECREE

WHICH PROHIBITED TRADE BETWEEN MAINLAND CHINA AND THAILAND BUT THIS HAS NOT YET BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE GOVERNMENT GAZETTE. THE ACCELERATED TRIP TO PEKING SUGGESTS THAT THE ARABIAN VENTURE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN AS SUCCESSFUL AS PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS INDICATE.

4. A GROUP OF STUDENTS FROM THE THAMMASAT GRADUATES GROUP RECENTLY HELD FOUR DAYS OF RALLIES IN SOUTHERN THAILAND. IN ADDITION TO THEIR DEMOCRATIC MESSAGE, THE GROUP CRITICIZED AMERICAN AID AS NOT BENEFITING THE POPULATION AND CALLED FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN BASES. AN UNDERCURRENT OF OPINION CRITICAL OF THE UNITED STATES PERVADES THE THAI INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY AND WILL PROBABLY BE INCREASINGLY EXPRESSED IN THE NEW DEMOCRATIC ENVIRONMENT. THAI ECONOMIC NATIONALISM DIRECTED AT JAPANESE FINANCIAL INTERESTS WAS MANIFESTED IN A SMALL STUDENT DEMONSTRATION AGAINST THAI DAIMARU, A JAPANESE CONTROLLED DEPARTMENT STORE IN BANGKOK.

5. THE PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT, SUCCUMBING TO STUDENT CRITICISM AND PUBLIC SCEPTICISM, RECENTLY ANNOUNCED MAJOR PERSONNEL RE-SHUFFLES. BROADCASTS DURING THE OCTOBER EVENTS THAT THE STUDENTS WERE COMMUNISTS CONSIDERABLY WEAKENED PRD CREDIBILITY. A STRIKE AT THE MAIN GOVERNMENT RADIO STATION AND GENERAL UNREST WITHIN THE BUREAUCRACY FINALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE REORGANIZATION WHICH INCLUDED THE RESIGNATION OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL. THESE MOVES SHOULD STRENGTHEN PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT PRONOUNCEMENTS.

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